

HWMR: THE ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST AS REVEALED IN MATTHEW (Week 2)

Christ as the Physician and the Bridegroom

Scripture Reading: *Matt. 9:10-13, 15; Rev. 19:7-9*

- Matt. 9:10 And as He was reclining at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and reclined together with Jesus and His disciples.
- Matt. 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, Why does your Teacher eat with the tax collectors and sinners?
- Matt. 9:12 Now when He heard this, He said, Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill.
- Matt. 9:13 But go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.
- Matt. 9:15 And Jesus said to them, The sons of the bridechamber cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.
- Rev. 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.
- Rev. 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
- Rev. 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

Day 1

Matt. 9:14-15 - Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast much, but Your disciples do not fast? And Jesus said to them, The sons of the bridechamber cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? ...

I. The Gospel of Matthew reveals that **Christ is versus religion and that the things concerning Christ are **outside of religion**:**

- A. The birth of Christ, the finding of Christ, the recommending of Christ, and the following of Christ were **all outside of religion**—1:18-23; 2:1-12; 3:1-12; 4:12-22.
- B. Any thought of doing things miraculously in religion is a temptation of the devil—vv. 5-7.
- C. As the **Physician** and the **Bridegroom**, Christ is versus religion—9:12, 15.
- D. The Lord Jesus does not care for religious tradition; **He cares for inward reality**—15:1-20.

This young man Saul was born into and raised in the Jewish religion. Saul was a religious person not just by teaching or training but by birth. Many of us were also religious people. We were born into and raised in Christianity. We were religious by birth. You may feel that it is good to be born into and raised in religion. It seems better than being born into and raised in a sinful environment. But we have to realize that religion does not help people to fulfill, to carry out, God's plan. **Religion is even something against God's plan**; it may be good but it is something other than Christ. It is hard for some people to really know Christ because they are so religious. They may know the doctrines, teachings, forms, rituals, and regulations, **but they do not know the living Christ Himself**.

We need to look at today's situation in the light of this fellowship. Many Christians are involved in Christianity as a religion with **forms, regulations, and teachings, yet they possess very little of Christ Himself**. Many people are born into Christianity and have been raised in Christianity, but they do not know Christ. They need the Lord to intervene in their situation so that Christ can be revealed into them. Saul was born in Judaism, into the best religion, yet he needed a second birth. He needed to be regenerated, to be born again with the divine life. (*A Young Man in God's Plan, Chapter 2*)

Day 2

Matt. 9:10-11 - *And as He was reclining at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and reclined together with Jesus and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, Why does your Teacher eat with the tax collectors and sinners?*

II. **Matthew 9:10-13** indicates that we may experience and enjoy **Christ as the Physician**:

- A. In calling people to **follow Him for the kingdom**, the Lord Jesus ministered as a **Physician**, not a Judge.
- B. A judge's judgment is according to righteousness, whereas a **physician's healing is according to mercy and grace**.
- C. Christ came to minister as a Physician, to **heal, recover, enliven, and save** us, so that we might be **reconstituted** to be His new and heavenly citizens, with whom He is establishing His heavenly kingdom on this corrupted earth.
- D. "But go and learn what this means, 'I desire **mercy** and not sacrifice'"—v. 13:

Day 3

Matt. 9:12-13 - *...He said, Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill. But go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*

1. The Lord Jesus **heals our spiritual illness**, the illness of sin.
2. Between sin and death there are all kinds of illnesses, diseases, and infirmities.
3. The Lord Jesus **forgives** our sins and also heals us in every way.
4. As sinners, we are **sick absolutely**, for we are sick **physically, spiritually, morally, and mentally**, but Jesus, the Forgiver and the Physician, is able to heal all our sicknesses.
5. As our Physician, the Lord **heals us mainly in our spirit** and in our soul, not mainly in our body.
6. Although the Lord may or may not heal us in our body, **He is always ready** to heal us in every part of our spirit and soul.
7. The healing of the Lord as our Physician is not mainly physical but **spiritual**; He is the One who heals our spiritual sicknesses.

God wants a group of people who are **filled with Him and express Him**—just like the Lord Jesus. For this we must have the **proper humanity**, which is the basic structure and strength of the church. Satan tries to frustrate God's purpose by attacking man's humanity. **He especially attacks the young people with immorality, drugs, and mental illness.** These things can damage young people to the point that they become **useless for God's expression.** We should not be ignorant of the enemy's tactics. Too many young people have been ruined and even killed by drugs and alcohol.

The Lord Jesus is living in us. You should **sense the Lord objecting in your conscience** when you begin to go too far in the things you do, the things you look at, and even the clothes you wear. Too many things in the world are designed to stir up people's lust—lust which Satan uses to damage humanity. In such matters you should not be too "spiritual," thinking that you can resist any temptation. Flee first! Then, seek the Lord with all them who call on Him out of a pure heart.

The things we mentioned above must be more than clear to us. We must also realize that even our sloppiness and laziness can frustrate the Lord. You should sense the Lord objecting inside you when you throw your socks on the floor. It is easier to leave them there, but that is not the humanity of the God-man; that is your lazy self. What will your friends see when they visit your room? You may preach to them often about the Lord but they will only remember your messy room. **How we need to enjoy the Lord's fine humanity!** We, as the church, must be very different from today's constantly degrading society so that God can be expressed through the highest humanity.

Do not say, "I am not Jesus, I cannot be like Him. When I get older I will be better." **No! Today, when you see that you are short of the standard of Jesus' humanity, you can open to Him, call on Him, and receive the Spirit.** We cannot imitate the Lord's human living, but it can become ours by our taking Him in. We have said repeatedly that all that Christ is and has done is now in the life-giving Spirit. The Spirit today is the Spirit of the man Jesus. Not only is there divinity in the Spirit but even more there is the humanity of Jesus. This is the way to grow up into Christ in all things. You cannot be like Christ by imitation, but neither should you wait for the future to be like Him. Today is the day we can take Him in, live Him, and be "Jesusly" human. His highest, finest, and perfect humanity is our need today for the church life. Then God will be expressed through man for the testimony of Jesus. When we have such a living, others will be touched and will be attracted to the church. (*Lesson Book, Level 2: The Triune God—The Triune God and the Person and Work of Christ, Chapter 15*)

Day 4

1 Tim. 5:23 - No longer drink water only, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

2 Tim. 4:20 - Erastus remained in Corinth, and Trophimus I left at Miletus sick.

- E. Paul's experience in his later ministry helps us to have a **proper appreciation of Christ** as the believers' Physician:
1. In 2 Timothy 4:20b Paul says, "Trophimus I left at Miletus **sick.**"
 2. The apostle Paul left such an intimate one **in sickness** without exercising healing prayer for him.
 3. Paul also did not execute his healing gift (Acts 19:11-12) to cure Timothy of his stomach illness; rather, Paul instructed him to take the **natural way for healing** (1 Tim. 5:23).

4. Paul encouraged Timothy to take a little wine, and he left Trophimus in Miletus.
 5. Paul cared for his co-workers in **a very human way**.
 6. The reason Paul cared for them in this way is that, in a time of suffering, Paul and his co-workers were **under the discipline of the inner life rather** than under the power of the outward gift.
 7. The former is of **grace in life**; the latter is of gift in power—miraculous power.
 8. Paul's experience should help us to see that, for the most part, **Christ's healing today is for the spirit and the soul**.
 9. If we see this vision, we will **trust in Christ** and experience Him as our Physician.
- F. As our Physician, **Christ has healing authority**:
1. His healing is not simply a matter of power but also of **authority**.
 2. There is no need for Him to touch us directly in order to heal us.
 3. **He needs only to speak a word**, and His authority comes with His word to heal us—Matt. 8:8.
 4. Our Physician **heals us with His authority**.

Day 5

Matt. 25:1 - At that time the kingdom of the heavens will be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

John 3:29 - He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

III. In Matthew and Revelation Christ is revealed as the **Bridegroom**—Matt. 9:15; Rev. 19:7-9:

- A. **Matthew 25:1** is a further word concerning the Lord Jesus as the Bridegroom:
1. This verse reveals that the **Lord will come back as the Bridegroom**, as the most pleasant and attractive person.
 2. The Bible reveals that Christ is God embodied to have the **bride**.
 3. Therefore, Christ's status is that of the **Bridegroom**.
 4. As the Bridegroom, He is the **pleasant person for our enjoyment**.
 5. We should appreciate Christ not only as our **Physician for the recovery of life** but also as our **Bridegroom for a living enjoyment in His presence**.

Day 6

Rev. 19:7-9 - Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints. And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb...

- B. **Revelation 19:7-9** unveils Christ as the **Bridegroom**:
1. These verses reveal that the Lord Jesus is the **Lamb as the Bridegroom**.
 2. Christ is presented **both** as the Lamb and as the Bridegroom.
 3. In the Gospel of **John**, Christ is revealed both as the **Lamb** who came to take away sin and as the **Bridegroom** who came that He might have the bride.

4. The **Lamb** is for **redemption**, and the **Bridegroom** is for the **wedding**.
5. The redemption was accomplished by Christ as the Lamb of God, and the wedding will take place when Christ as the coming Bridegroom takes His bride.
6. As the **Bridegroom**, Christ **must have a wedding**; our position is that of the **bride**, and the position of the coming Christ is that of the **Bridegroom**.
7. We are on the earth being prepared to become the **bride** to meet Him, and He is on the throne in the third heaven prepared to come as the **Bridegroom** to meet us.
8. He is coming as the **Bridegroom**, and we are going as the **bride**—Matt. 25:1.

Now we see the religious concept. Do not blame those Jewish people; we must blame ourselves. We have all become religious. We are still to some extent under religion's influence. We are talking about fasting and praying, while the Lord Jesus is saying, "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?" The Lord Jesus is not speaking in doctrines or religious rituals, but pointing to **Himself as the Bridegroom**. Our God, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Lord and Master today is a Bride groom to us. **We must all drop the religious concept and take up something new**. I cannot force you, but I would ask you from this day to contact the Lord again and again with the sense that He is your Bridegroom. Would you? There is not much need to pray in the old religious way. I am afraid that when you forget God, you just forget Him; then, whenever you turn back to Him, you immediately pray in that old way. It is so easy to pray like that. But when you pray in the way of appreciating the Lord, it is entirely different. Do not think this is my teaching; it is the Lord's revelation. **The Lord is going to recover it, and He is doing it now. We must have a change. Repent! Change your concept! Be buried! Enjoy Jesus as the Bridegroom!**

We need our concept radically changed. **When we come to our meetings, the church meetings, we are coming to meet the Bridegroom**. Whenever we come together, we are coming to be with our Bridegroom. His presence means everything to us. As long as He is with us, we need **no regulations, no rituals, no doctrines or forms**. Why does Christianity today need so many doctrines, forms, rituals, and regulations? Because they have lost the presence of the Lord. In a wedding we have the presence of the bridegroom, but in a funeral we have lost the presence of a dear one. In Christianity people have lost the presence of the dear One, so there is no excitement. **But we have the presence of our Bridegroom, and His presence is everything to us**. How could we help but be excited? We have to shout, we have to be exceedingly joyful. The Bridegroom is with us—Hallelujah! (*Christ versus Religion, Chapter 1*)